

Diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 1994, he never let his physical condition diminish his spirit and he remained active in the Rhode Island community and the Democratic Party. In Rhode Island, the Pell name is legendary in politics and synonymous with the best attributes of public service, and his legacy endures.

The esteemed Senator once stated, "The strength of the United States is not the gold at Fort Knox or the weapons of mass destruction that we have, but the sum total of the education and the character of our people." Believing that education was the great equalizer, he created legislation that passed in 1972 establishing the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants—better known now as Pell Grants—that provide financial assistance to students who may not otherwise be able to attend college. It is estimated that a remarkable 54 million students have benefited from these grants.

Due to his love of the arts, he also authored the legislation, as my colleague, Congressman KENNEDY, mentioned, creating the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He helped shape our country's foreign policy and believed strongly in the power of diplomacy. He stood up to defend rights for all Americans, regardless of race, class or sexual orientation.

Knowing him for more than two decades, I considered Senator Pell a friend and a mentor and had the opportunity of interning in his Washington, DC office during my studies at Rhode Island College. I found it to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my life and the beginning of a career path that led me here to Congress as a representative of Rhode Island's Second Congressional District.

As I began my own career in government, Senator Pell was always there for me, offering advice and support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. In continuing my tribute to Senator Pell, Madam Speaker, Senator Pell was and always will be a role model as I work to serve the people of Rhode Island just as he did, with courage and integrity.

This past Monday, Senator Pell was remembered by his family, colleagues from the Senate, President Clinton, Vice President-elect Biden, and many

others. It was a fitting tribute to his years of public service and his life-long vision for our country.

Madam Speaker, it is an understatement to say that his presence will be forever missed, but his enduring legacy will live on in his many accomplishments that have enhanced our country greatly, and especially the past, present and future students who have achieved a higher education because of Pell Grants. And it will live on in the people of Rhode Island, who have benefited greatly from his life's work.

My thoughts and prayers are with his entire family, especially his beloved wife of 64 years, Nuala Pell, during this very difficult time.

I join with my friend and colleague, Congressman KENNEDY, to say that Senator Pell had a tremendous impact on our careers. And again, we extend both our sincerest condolences to the entire Pell family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KIRK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ISRAEL AND HAMAS CONFLICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the devastating situation in Gaza.

Each of us in this Chamber knows what it's like to deal with a terrorist attack on our soil and against our people. Over the last several years, the Israeli people have been constantly bombarded by terrorist attacks on their soil and against their people. Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in late 2005, more than 6,000 rocket and mortar attacks from Hamas and other terrorist groups were fired into their territory.

The Government of Israel has a right and a responsibility to defend and protect its people. To stand idly by while hundreds of bombs explode on Israeli territory would have indeed been an irresponsible position for Israel's government to take, and continuing to do nothing could cause long-term detrimental implications to Israel's security in the region.

So Madam Speaker, critics who have said that Israel responded to Hamas in a disproportionate or indiscriminate way are wrong. Madam Speaker, I ask,

what amount of force would have been necessary to stop the brutal attacks, to put an end to the terrorists' rocket launching pad in Gaza?

Hamas has repeatedly targeted school yards and hospitals filled with children and civilians in Israel. And the militants have been deliberate in operating from places where Gazan civilians have sought shelter, jeopardizing innocent lives in Gaza. Only Hamas is responsible for the massacre of the people in Gaza. Hamas is responsible for this conflict.

Today marks the 12th day of this conflict, and I think we all hope for a cease-fire to take place soon. However, even if the parties can reach an agreement to a cease-fire, it remains to be seen whether it will be durable.

Therefore, I strongly urge support for Israel's right to self-defense and its efforts to protect itself militarily. I also urge the United Nations and our European allies to do the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ECONOMY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here as we start another 2 years in a new Congress, the 111th Congress. It is an humbling honor to get to follow in the footsteps of so many giants.

I come today to talk a bit about the economy and what's been done so far and what is being proposed to be done in the future. Now, there is so much to be learned from people who have been around this place and been on this Earth for many, many decades. A fellow down in Nacogdoches had the wisdom, when he was told by a young reporter on his 95th birthday, "Congratulations on your 95th birthday, I hope you're not offended, but I hope I never turn 95," and the gentleman said, "Well, son, that's because you're not 94." But a man over 90 approached me there and said that he was sick and tired of hearing people say, oh, this is the worst day since the Depression, some people saying it's as bad as the 1930s Depression. And he said, let me tell you about the Depression. I was there. Sometimes we went for 2 days without eating. And I look around nowadays and I see people offended if they don't have three cars in their family. They've got a computer, they've got cell phones, they've got all these things, and they're trying to tell me that this is as bad as the Depression